APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY
2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: College Possible   Application ID: 14ED157374

Program Name: College Possible National

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

Strengths:

National and state data, combined with city-specific data for Philadelphia and Milwaukee, create a solid case for the need for services to help low-income students in those cities prepare for and navigate the college application and enrollment process.

As stated by the applicant, nationwide only 8% of young people from low-income backgrounds earn a four-year college degree by the age of 24. The four locations that the applicant has chosen to provide College Possible all have significant low-income populations with an even more significant percentage of adults without a bachelor's degree.

The applicant effectively describes the disparities in education, to include students' access to post-secondary education in Portland, Oregon; Philadelphia, PA; Milwaukee, WI; and Twin Cities, Minnesota.

The applicant successfully correlates low academic success for high school students and post-secondary education students as being linked to low-income backgrounds.

The 2013 studies by Avery and ICF International reporting the substantial benefits realized by College Possible participants provide solid evidence for the program's effectiveness in helping low-income high school students gain admission to and enroll in college.

The College Possible program, chosen by the applicant, is a highly effective intervention to positively impact the community problems, and to address issues of college preparedness, enrollment and completion, as identified by the applicant, based on the evidence and studies cited.

The applicant describes a consistent and well-aligned Theory of Change that demonstrates a logical relationship between inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes.

The applicant collected data that provides appropriate evidence for success in academic achievement for K-12

students and college admission directly following high school.

The applicant provided compelling evidence of past success in improving students' performance on standardized tests and increasing college admission, enrollment, and graduation.

The applicant's past performances in the past three years demonstrate success in increasing academic performance, student admission and enrollment in colleges, and students earning a four-year degree.

The applicant's past performance demonstrates success in its target areas of academic success, AmeriCorps member enrollment and retention, student ACT scores, and academic performance in math and literacy.

The applicant's past performance for 2012 indicates that 98 percent of College Possible students earned admission to college and 85 percent of 2013 high school seniors enrolled in college the fall immediately following high school graduation.

Weaknesses:

The state-wide data cited to illustrate the need for the College Possible program in Portland and Minnesota's Twin Cities do not clearly document the need in those cities.

The applicant provides state data, but does not provide local data for the four locations chosen by the program.

The applicant supplied limited data relative to academic achievement to correspond with the problem/need in Portland, Oregon. The applicant provided national and state data relative to low income being linked to the problem/need; however, the application lacked clarity in the description of local data.

It is not clear how the community service opportunities mentioned in the Logic Model will contribute toward achievement of the stated goals of improved financial knowledge, improved academic performance, and increased preparation for college.

The intervention dosages illustrated within the Logic Model are not clearly documented.

No significant weaknesses were noted for Past Performance in the College Possible application.